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INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT

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THE POSCO SHENANIGANS

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- FOREST RIGHTS ACT VIOLATED
- A COVER-UP REPORT
- SEAFRONT HERITAGE THREATENED

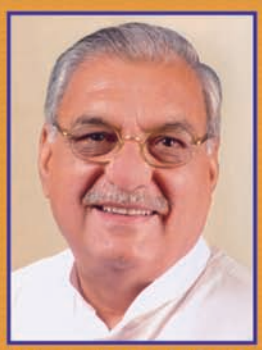
R.N.I. NO: DELENG/2007/19719

0976-2906

Endangered Olive Ridley turtles on Orrisa's coastline where the project is planned

Grant Money Under Indira Gandhi Priyadarshini Vivah Shagun Yojna Increased More Than Two Times

- 'Shagun' grant money to families belonging to Scheduled Castes living below the poverty line for the marriage of their daughters and to widows belonging to all sections of society for their own re-marriage as well as for the marriage of their daughters increased from **Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 31,000**.
- 'Shagun' to other poor families living below the poverty line increased from **Rs. 5100 to Rs. 11,000**.
- **'Indira Bal Swasthya Yojna'** and **'Nehru Drishty Yojna'** are implemented in the State.



Bhupinder Singh Hooda
Chief Minister, Haryana

हरियाणा की महिलाओं का बढ़ाया सम्मान
कन्या भ्रूण हत्या रोकने का अनूठा निदान

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VOL.4, ISSUE 8 | NOVEMBER 2010

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From the Editor-in-Chief

THE worst reason put forth to justify holding the Commonwealth Games (CWG) in New Delhi was that this grand event would showcase a brilliant new India to the world. It would be the window through which the whole international community would see India in a novel light rather than out of the tinted frames of the past that showed our nation as a murky, backward, hopelessly slothful, barely sub-Saharan land.

When the Commonwealth window opened, the sights and sounds that the world beheld negated all the positive branding of our nation that has been occurring over the last decade – "India Shining", "Incredible India". Today, the India brand, as projected by CWG, is a disagreeable cocktail of filth, inefficiency, venality, lack of national pride, waste, fraud and corruption.

This international perception was noticeable not only in the media and comments of ordinary people in Commonwealth countries but also in papers like *The New York Times* whose only interest in CWG was the opportunity it gave their correspondents to report what is drastically wrong with India. All the glitz and glamour and gyrations of Bollywood, all the laser shows meant, ultimately, nothing. Bollywood will go on with its dancing and singing. Laser shows will continue to mesmerize. They showcase their own art forms, not India.

In any case, what was the pressing need to spend thousands of crores of rupees to "showcase" India to the world? Who cares? Why are we stuck with the slave mentality that we must periodically dance before our former masters in order to sustain our self-confidence?

Have our rulers ever considered that more important than "showcasing" themselves to the world, is to showcase the importance of service to the hapless Indian public? The best exhibition of itself that India can offer to the world is of a nation deeply committed to good governance, the uplift of the poor, and sustainable development. It does not need huge amphitheatres and auditoria for this. It needs, instead, the stage of India.

On this stage we need to see Indians working for India. We need to see our sewage systems and garbage disposal mechanisms in their proper channels rather than overflowing on our streets and playing host to vermin and germs that infect our citizens; we need to convert our sewers back into the rivers they were (before they turned into sewers); we need to see fearless town planners standing in the way of encroachments; we need to see our village schools bursting with qualified teachers; we need to see the elimination of year-long queues of people lined up for justice in front of indifferent courts.

Yes, we need to see the arm of good governance reaching out without fear or favour to every doorstep of rural and urban areas, trying within the reasonable limits of human endeavour to ensure the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and justice. We need to see our jails full – of crooked politicians, businessmen and the bureaucrats who aid mismanagement and corruption.

Showcasing the best of what India can and should achieve to the Indians themselves would be the finest exhibit that our nation can put on show for the rest of the world. CWG-type bread-and-circus *tamasha*s are no substitute for good governance. They put into the public glare not what is the best in us but what is the worst.

INDERJIT BADHWAR

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Cover Photograph: REUTERS

Bureaucracy not pan-Indian

Your subtle inference of the Malayalee bureaucrat lobby ruling the roost was amusing. This would surely create some flutter in the bureaucractic circle.

But, this trend of a certain lobby dominating our country's institutions of governance is not new. *Malayalam Manorama* had carried a feature when the pandit (Brahmin) lobby in the 1960s under the Congress government dominated top bureaucratic posts and there was a stark absence of faces from south Indian states. Our institutions of governance would do well with a pan-Indian character and the media shouldn't shy away from pointing out the lack of that.

BN Uniyal, New Delhi

There are exceptions like you. But the face of the Indian bureaucracy remains still the same and sometimes it appears to be worse than the time of the British. Most of our bureaucrats spend office time in thinking about their promotion and not doing what is expected of them.

RamKishore Upadhyay on blog

Good to learn that our IT Secretary (Rentala Chandrasekhar) holds a degree in computers. But visit the website of the IT Ministry and one may find the ways of babus in evidence: no feedback/communication can be sent to anyone in the ministry though there is a provision in the website for it. After typing out the message/suggestions/complaints the sender will be dismayed to find that the message does not go.

Anil Maheshwari on blog

Notes on First Stirrings

OP Gahrotra was never the head of SEBI. This article (First Stirrings, OP Gahrotra) sounds very self-congratulatory and has factual errors

Ujwal Thakar on blog

Arun Bongirwar in his First Stirrings talks about the shortage of Maharashtrians in the state cadre. Well, from what I remember of the Civil Services system, the idea has always been to have a national mix, so I do not think it was ever the practice to give people their home cadres.

Urvi Sukul Singh on blog

Excellent pieces!

I found for the first time a magazine on the internet with such rich material and so full of advertisements which shows that the magazine is being maintained well.

Satish Mudgal on blog

Excellent pieces in the magazine's website. The site is very userfriendly and well managed. Keep up the good work.

Atul Saxena on blog

Nobody can quarrel with the main contention that the higher civil services must assume greater independence from political domination and play a more proactive role in public service. However, without parallel education of the political masters on bringing civil servant-politician relations to a more even keel, the civil services by themselves can hardly bring about meaningful and effective changes in governance and administration.

SN Kakar, IAS (Retd), on blog

MG Devasahayam has done a masterly analysis of the present predicament of the IAS community. He is a good writer, it is not surprising that he did it well. He should have written a few lines on the remedy for this cancer, corroding and eroding the foundation of administration.

Dr P Pandian, IAS (Retd), on blog

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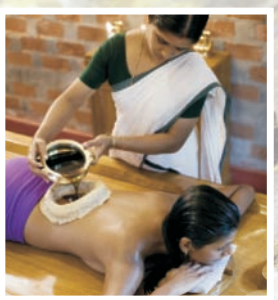

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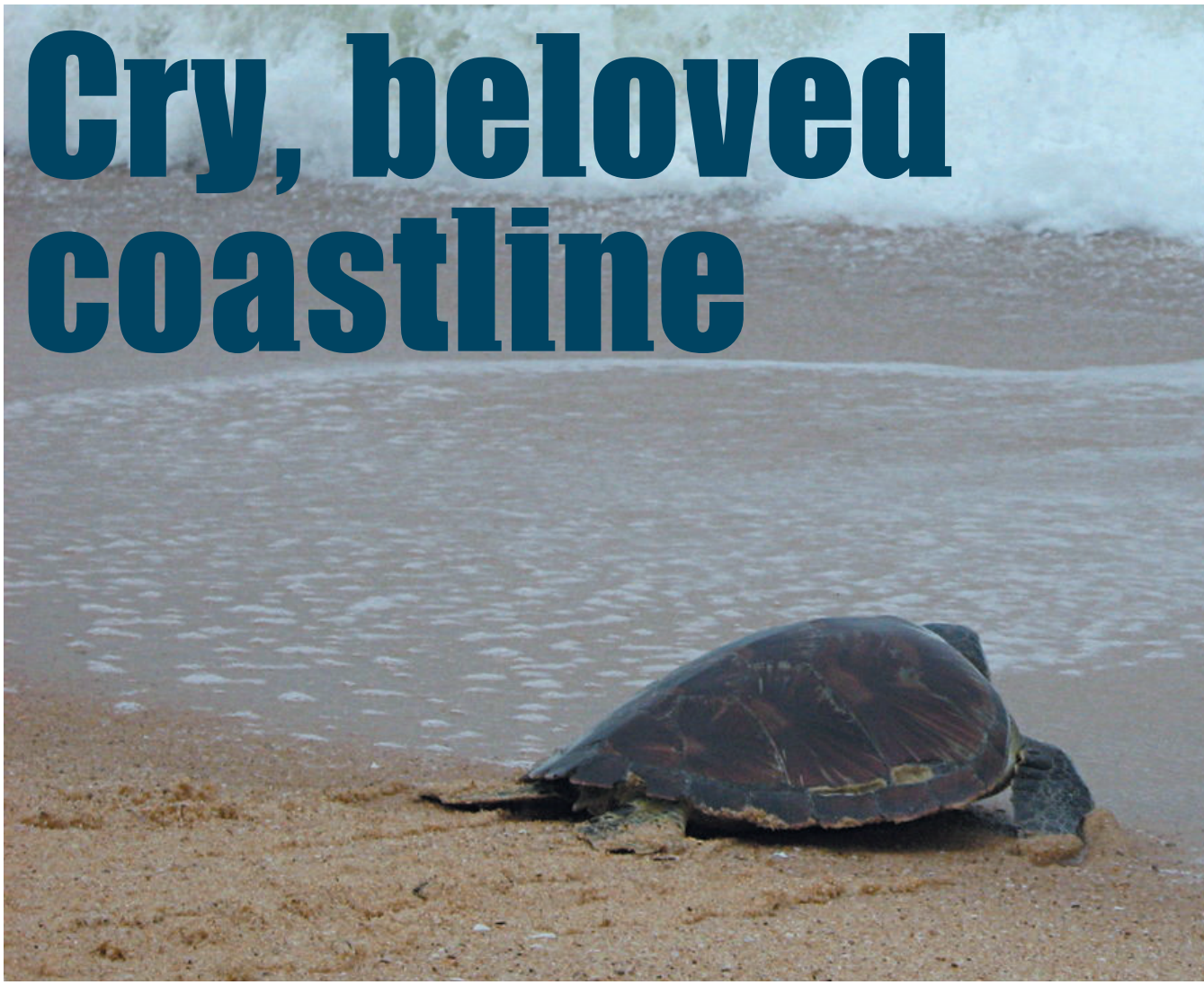
Cry, beloved coastline



Is this $12-billion project a sleight-of-land venture to short-sell Indian resources

by **MG Devasahayam**

POSCO-India's project to build a steel plant yielding 12 million tonnes per year in Orissa, with a captive port and iron ore mines, is acclaimed as the single largest infusion of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) since the Indian economy liberalized in 1991. Estimated at $12 billion (Rs 52,000 crore), the project, said the Orissa government, would "bring prosperity and well-being" to its people through industrialization based upon exploitation of its natural resources. However, the project has faced strong resistance from a vigorous people's movement on the ground, comprising villagers apprehensive of losing land and livelihood. Consequently, five years after the project's launch, POSCO has yet to acquire a single acre of land and is embroiled in legal, logistical and procedural quagmires.

Perhaps to rescue the company, Minister of State for Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh appointed a four-member committee comprising Meena Gupta, former Secretary, MoEF, V Suresh, a civil liberties lawyer, and Devender Pande and Urmila Pingle, experts on forests and tribals, respectively, to go into all issues relating to the environmental and forest clearances granted to the project. Ironically, the committee's majority report (3 to 1) has further pushed the company into the slush by recommending revocation of the environmental, coastal and forest clearances granted.

and seafront heritage?

The finding is as damning as that of the NC Saxena Committee in the case of Vedanta: that these clearances were secured through suppression of relevant information by the project proponent, that regulatory agencies systematically overlooked critical concerns, and that key appraisal bodies of the MoEF and the Orissa government ignored experts' demands for comprehensive inquiry and rushed the clearances through regardless of the project's irreversible and widespread social, environmental and economic consequences.

At the outset, the appointment of Gupta, who was Secretary of the Ministry when the clearances for POSCO were accorded, as the committee chairperson was a case of conflict

The committee's majority report (3 to 1) has further pushed the company into the slush by recommending revocation of the environmental, coastal and forest clearances granted.

of interest. There was obviously a hidden agenda which is revealed in her highly opinionated "minority" report starting with her objection to the Terms of Reference of the Committee to "review compliance with statutory provisions, approvals, clearances and permissions under various statutes, rules, notifications, etc." She also castigated the other members when they wanted to assess not merely the compliance with the clearances granted, but the grant of the clearances *per se*.

Her report recommends adoption of a "business as usual" approach i.e. the POSCO project should go ahead, while some more comprehensive studies could be undertaken though they will have no bearing whatsoever on mitigating the project's massive environmental and social impact. She also did not want anyone to even question the legitimacy of the clearances given when she was at the helm of affairs.

GUPTA'S shenanigans appear to be not merely to cover up her own role but also the continued complicity of the MoEF. This is evident from the fraudulent manner in which POSCO obtained the Environmental and Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearances. To start with, this massive project was deliberately unbundled into its smaller parts and applications moved to secure their clearances as though they were independent projects (4 MTPA steel complexes, 400 MW power plants and captive "minor" port), even though they constituted one project and were situated within one complex and POSCO had clear intentions of ramping up production to the full capacity of 12 MTPA in just six years (by 2011). These clearances were given on the strength of a single-season rapid EIA instead of full-year comprehensive EIA, as required.

The township project, requiring considerable additional land, as well as the huge water requirement for the project were suppressed. Claiming the port to be a "minor" one is a major fraud. The port was designed for Capesize ships – 170,000 DTW capacity, each approximately 280 m in length, perhaps the largest built in Asia, to come into the ecological-

PIB

Gupta covers up her own and the MoEF's complicity. This is evident from the manner in which POSCO obtained the environmental and related clearances.

ly sensitive Jatadhar creek. This would require 12-km channels and tranquil berthing facilities for which there would be massive sea walls built – one 2 km and another 1.6 km long.

The devastation that such massive infrastructure facilities would cause is unimaginable, considering that the Jatadhar creek is an important nesting site for the critically endangered Olive Ridley turtles. This is the region of *paan kethi*s (betel vine farms) where sand dunes provide sweet soil and water and also protection during cyclones.

POSCO also did not come clean on the fact that it would raise the entire base of the 4004-acre plant area by five metres by dumping millions of tonnes of sand dredged from the sea to protect the plant from a supercyclone like the one that slammed Orissa in 1999 (with wind speeds of 260 kmph, waves of 5.6 m height and 100 km length). It swept some 20 km into the hinterland and killed 15,000 people. That the ramifications of such a plant design will devastate the ecologically sensitive estuarine and deltaic complex and potentially increase vulnerability of surrounding regions was clearly not a concern for POSCO or the MoEF authorities.

The people deserve an answer from Jairam Ramesh, the scholarly Minister striving to bridge the "cultural divide" between environment and development.

PIB

The "majority report" is clear that there was comprehensive violation of the due processes of the Forests Rights Act by the Orissa government and suppression of critical concerns of environmental and social impacts of the project, raised in the Orissa State Pollution Control Board, Regional Office of MoEF (Bhubaneswar) and in initial meetings of the Environmental Appraisal Committees of the Ministry. Hence the recommendation for their immediate revocation.

THE majority report reveals from file notings that there were pressures – especially from the Union Finance Ministry, then headed by P Chidambaram, a former Director in Vedanta. It says: "The committee is constrained to comment that the proximity of dates between the letters from the Finance Ministry and the hasty processing of the approvals by the MoEF and the EAC despite the serious shortcomings and illegalities is more than a mere coincidence. It is very clear that not all is well with the functioning of the MoEF. We are also constrained to observe that the brazen interference by the Ministry of Finance into functioning of another Ministry is most unfortunate, highly improper and against public interest."

It has also been revealed that where there should be only one set of minutes of the final decisions of the Expert Appraisal Committee of the MoEF, there are actually two, the unofficial version amended by the chair to benefit POSCO.

What all this reveals is that the POSCO project, like the Vedanta one, is a sleight-of-hand joint venture to short-sell India's natural

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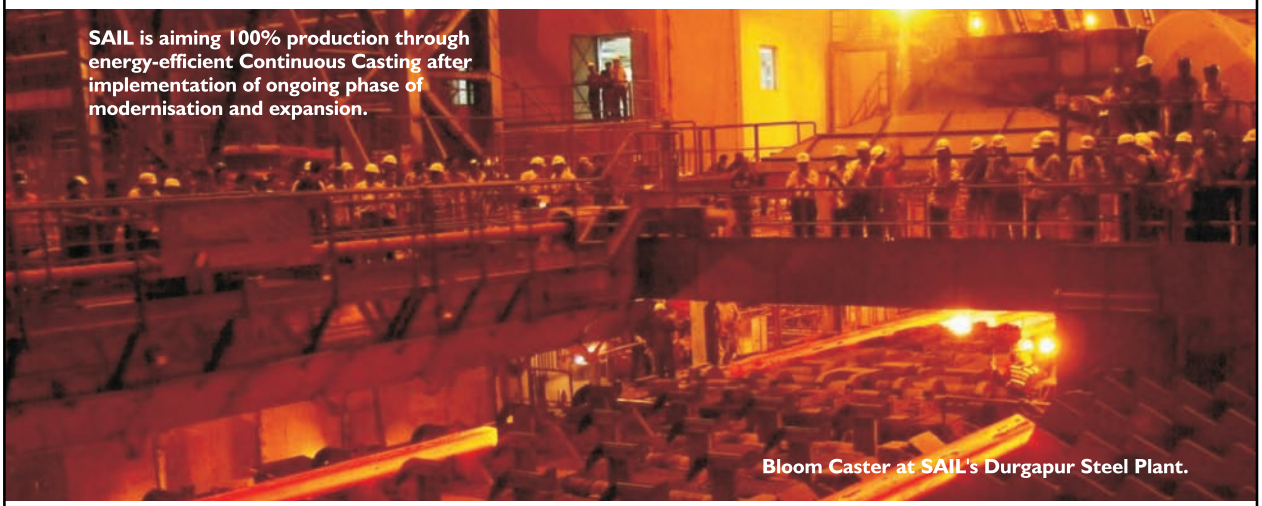
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Manmohan Singh with POSCO boss Ku-Tack Lee in 2005: facing new realities

Efforts are on to bring about an image makeover for the project. Certain media groups have joined this charade by calling the independent majority group a "kangaroo court".

resources to corporate moneybags. Were one to factor in the issues involved in the mining clearances, not yet secured, particularly the revenue stream losses – given the pathetically low royalties now required to be paid – the project is certain to be an exemplary carpet-bagging exercise.

Intense efforts are on to bring about an image makeover for the POSCO project. Certain media groups have joined this charade by calling the independent majority group a "kangaroo court" without any expertise while hailing the pliable former bureaucrat as an expert.

The Vedanta and POSCO episodes raise a critical question. What is the mandate of the MoEF? Is it to protect and safeguard the environment and natural resources of the country, which is the common heritage of its 1.2 billion people? Or to function as a midwife chaperoning corporate investors and carpetbaggers in mindlessly exploiting our natural heritage by willfully violating the laws of the land?

There is another reason for concern. Recently, a new entity – a "road on stilts", an euphemism for an 18-ft high and 80-ft wide concrete monstrosity on massive pylons – was smuggled into the CRZ draft notification to make it a permissible activity on India's sandy beaches over the waves. Given the potential this has for devastation of the Indian coastline by opening it up to huge construction and commercial real-estate development, it is easy to guess who are behind this crude manipulation.

The people deserve an answer from Jairam Ramesh, the scholarly Minister striving to bridge the "cultural divide" between environment and development. g

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Perneet and turbans

amarinder wife angers sikhs

PERNEET Kaur, wife of Captain Amarinder Singh, Maharaja of Patiala, and former Punjab Chief Minister, is not earning any goodwill from the Sikh community, if some non-political leaders are to be believed. The reason? France's severe restrictions on the wearing of turbans in schools and elsewhere. This has angered not only Sikh citizens of France but also a large section of Indian Sikhs. Most active among them has been the Kendriya Sri Guru Singh Sabha, and the Institute of Sikh Studies.

In recent months they have written to and met with Perneet, who is Minister of State for External Affairs, not only in her official capacity but also as a prominent representative of the Sikh community. In one meeting, a Sikh delegation reminded her that when a certain European country had done something to insult Hindu sentiments, New Delhi intervened and threatened to break diplomatic ties if corrective action was not taken. Why not, they argued, a similar gesture for Sikhs? Perneet reportedly responded that this would be uncomfortable for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh because it would look as if he, as a Sikh himself, was unduly favouring his own community. When pressed further as to why this could be done for Hindus and not Sikhs, she responded that the Hindus were, after all, the majority community.

CWG probes will come to nought

political tribe will go scot-free

Who will catch the Delhi politicians involved in the alleged corruption of CWG? No wonder politicians like Sheila Dikshit & Co, Suresh Kalmadi and Jaipal Reddy and others of their ilk hardly seem perturbed. Apart from the embezzlement in CWG, the people who run Delhi and also those who help Dikshit & Co run the country's capital have come up with a new trick. A team of the tax department is carrying out a detailed probe of purchase of agricultural land, particularly in the southwest and northwest districts of Delhi and also all major prime commercial and residential properties since 2006. It is not without reason that the NCT government enhanced the compensation for land acquisition three times from 2008. Most of the politicians had already bought whatever agriculture land was available prior to enhancement of these rates.

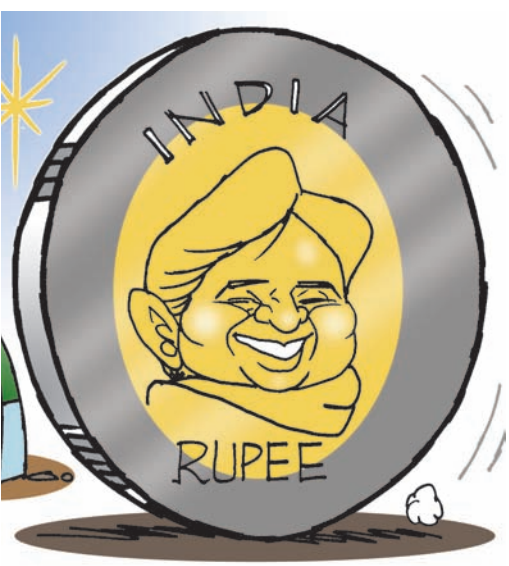
All money is Maya!

currency bundles

INDIA, most beautifully, is one of those countries where one can earn money with no questions asked. Mayawati has mastered this art better than any politician and taken her organisational skills beyond party affairs. Greater Noida is becoming another playground of the rich with booming real estate business but a certain building, housing money counting machines which run 24x7, show the real state of our country's politicians. The building is Mayawati's west UP collection centre. Insiders reveal the money is bundled and computer-generated hallmarks are pasted, with the details of the donor and the count embedded so that

ILLUSTRATIONS: ARUNA

they can be read by laser. This entire operation is done under the sharp gaze of Mayawati's brother. And then the money travels under police escort uninterruptedly to Lucknow.

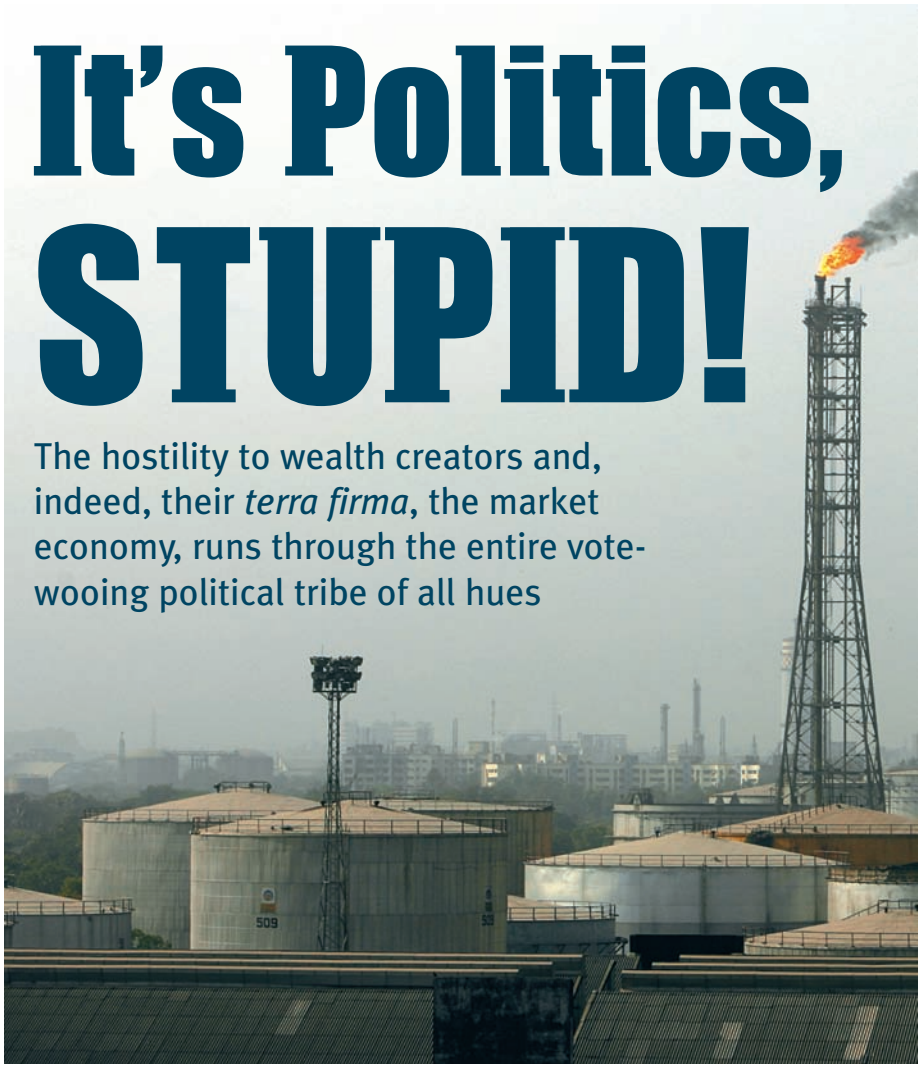


Minister under the rod
wife keeping tabs

OUR politicians may cut quite a macho figure when they address rallies with booming voices but, alas, at home the story is different. Most of the politicians have reposed their controls in the hands of their wives. A mature and seasoned minority community minister from Uttar Pradesh is facing a peculiar problem in his Shastri Bhawan office. His better half has deputed her trusted lieutenants as personal staff in the office. The appointment and favour seekers' list goes to the minister's home in the evening and is pruned by 'Madam'. The minister is perturbed for Madam gets reports even if he meets somebody outside his set schedule. The minister is well-mannered and cultured and knows this can't go on for long as his friends and well wishers are being alienated. So, he now meets his friends at India International Centre or a five-star hotel. The only problem: one has to trace his movements, which is an uphill task. g

by **Naresh Minocha**

It's Politics, STUPID!



The hostility to wealth creators and, indeed, their *terra firma*, the market economy, runs through the entire vote-wooing political tribe of all hues

IN its befuddled approach towards a governance mantra for natural resources, the ruling political elite harps on the rich-poor divide. Be it land, metals, or oil and gas, the bias against the well-off is becoming ever more pronounced. Wealth generation and ownership evokes derision. The trend is manifest in the proposal to reserve 26 per cent profit of mining companies for the local populace of the mining area, apart from providing handsome compensation, jobs, and basic amenities to those who yield their land. It is discernible in the recent decisions against prospecting and harnessing of natural resources, including hydropower, uranium, coal and metals, if it hurts the local sentiments and, of course, the environment.

The most blatant case in point is the Cabinet decision to scrap the environmentally-compliant 600 MW Loharinagar-Pala Barrage Project on the Bhagirathi river in Uttarakhand. A few hundred crore rupees invested in the project by public sector company NTPC have gone to waste.

The hostility to wealth creators and, indeed, their *terra firma*, the market economy, runs through the entire vote-wooing political tribe of all hues. This onslaught is clouding the prospects for governance of natural resources in a holistic and rational manner. The resulting ad hoc regulatory framework is apparent in the pricing of petroleum products – primarily derived from crude oil, 80 per cent of which is imported.

The phenomenon was recently articulated the other day by Mani Shankar Aiyar, former Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, who advocated energy security for the *aam aadmi* as being integral to national energy. "So long as there are obscene distortions of income and wealth in our democracy, the stability of that democracy demands differential pricing of essential articles of daily consumption, including essential petroleum products such as kerosene and LPG," he said, delivering the Lovraj Memorial Lecture, organized by the Petroleum Federation of India (Petrofed). Aiyar warned that market-driven pricing (MDP) of petroleum products would put these products beyond the reach of 800 million Indians. "Our current administered price regime disproportionately benefits the remaining 200 million Indians who can and should pay market prices. In short, the *aam aadmi* is being short-changed, and the *khaas memsahib* is being privileged. Subsidized LPG for the *memsahib* is doing far greater harm to our economy than subsidy leakages for kerosene," rued Aiyar. He added, "We do need to move beyond differential pricing of the ad hoc kind we now have."

Aiyar thus advocated a shift to a different kind of ad hocism. He suggested LPG be charged at full rates from all urban consumers not living in slum areas and be provided virtually free to people living in forests and remote habitations. Diesel should be subsidized only for transport trucks and buses. Petrol should be totally de-regulated.

The significance lies in the fact that

REUTERS

Aiyar, like any other Indian politician, loves ad hocism in the pricing of politically sensitive products (PSPs) such as liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), kerosene, diesel and petrol. Barring these four PSPs, the pricing of all other petroleum products is market-driven and is influenced by the movement in prices in global markets.

The present government jacked up petroleum prices twice this year – through budgetary imposts on February 27 and through a hike in the prices of the four PSPs on June 25. The government decided that the pricing of petrol and diesel would be market-determined. This decision was applied immediately to petrol. But the government has kept the nation in the dark as to when diesel will be decontrolled. To start with, it had merely allowed increase in retail selling price of diesel by Rs 2 per litre in Delhi with corresponding increases in other parts of the country.

The government has lurched from one ad hoc pricing arrangement to another since the so-called phase-out of administered price mechanism (APM) in April 2002.

What was overlooked was the fact that market-determined pricing (MDP) had been introduced for diesel way back in September 1997. It did not honour this decision in the same way as it backtracked on targets for phase-out of subsidies.

IN March 2002, the government reiterated that the LPG and kerosene subsidy would be borne out of the Consolidated Fund of India. It said: "After adjusting the flat rate of subsidy, the retail prices of these subsidized products will vary with the price of oil in the international market." It notified that LPG and kerosene subsidies would be phased out in three to five years. The phase-out deadline has been tinkered with time and again. It was last re-extended to March 31, 2014 from March 31, 2010.

The urge to intervene and create uncertainty due to political compulsions is evident in the price hike release. It stated: "Further increases will be made by the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) in consultation with the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas. It has also been decided that in case of a high rise and volatility in international oil prices, the government will suitably intervene in the pricing of petrol and diesel."

The petrol price decontrol is yet to pass the litmus test of global price turmoil. With the international crude prices showing only modest variations, the need for periodic and frequent hikes in petrol prices has not risen. Market leader Indian Oil Corporation thus raised the prices by only a few paise on September 21.

The word "ad hoc" spells magic for politicians of all hues who increasingly want to be seen flogging the rich to help the poor. They don't mind turning blind to the rabbit-like pace at which the poor procreate, thereby nullifying all benefits of economic development and perpetuating the poverty-population explosion-crime rate nexus. This is because they don't want to trample on such "human rights" even in the supreme interest of the nation.

The government has lurched from one ad hoc pricing arrangement to another since the so-called phase-out of administered price mechanism (APM) in April 2002. Under this, the government retained partial control over the price of domestic LPG and PDS kerosene.

PIB

Mani Shankar Aiyar says current administered prices benefit some 200 million Indians who can and should pay market prices. The aam aadmi is being short-changed, the memsahib is being privileged.

THE phase-out did not really result in MDP as the crucial elements of reforms – rationalization of indirect taxes and setting up of price stabilization fund (PSF) – were never put in place.

Each ad hoc arrangement has proved to be short-lived, harming both the oil companies and the economy. At best, the government has also tried to balance conflicting interests of different stakeholders while contriving such transient methods to cope with global oil price volatilities.

Aiyar says: "When international crude prices rise, equitable burden sharing between upstream companies, Central and State governments, and the consumer should be the guiding principle."

That is almost impossible to achieve with the Centre and States always trying to protect their tax revenue. Moreover, the government does not have the political will to uniformly and rationally distribute the burden among all players, including private sector companies. It has been doing different permutations and combinations of subsidy-sharing burden ever since the BJP government halted MDP in October 2003 with an eye on the Lok Sabha polls.

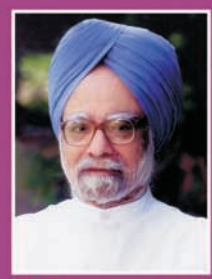
For equitable distribution of oil price shocks, it would have to invoke the relevant provisions of the Essential Commodities Act, which would mean a return to APM.

Taxes and subsidy should never coexist, say industry sources. No less a person than P Chidambaram, then Finance Minister, said so in January 2005. Voicing concern over this paradox, he stated that "taxes and subsidies in the

Reforms Recipe

A similar reforms recipe has been proposed by the International Energy Agency (IEA) in its study, titled "India's Downstream Petroleum Sector Refined Product Pricing and Refinery Investment", published in April 2010. It says that price reforms would facilitate cost-efficiency in refining industry and reduce subsidies, apart from encouraging fuel conservation and substitution. "This will simultaneously reduce India's crude import costs, and, as substitution to cleaner fuels occurs, greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced as well while boosting energy security. For each of these reasons, the GoI should move in the direction of market-based reform in petrol, diesel, LPG and kerosene markets. It should do this, however, while employing effective policy tools, such as price ceilings and highly targeted subsidies that provide energy market access for poor Indians, especially in LPG and kerosene markets," it suggests.

Smt. Sonia Gandhi
President, UPA



Dr. Manmohan Singh
Prime Minister

HARYANA

NURTURING THE GIRL CHILD

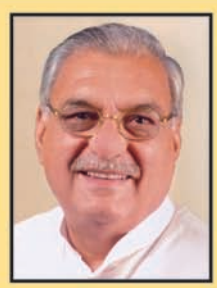
Schemes Implemented For The Welfare Of The Girl Child

- Under **'Ladli Social Security Allowance Scheme'**, a monthly pension of Rs. 500 is given to those parents, who have only girl child or children, from the 45th birthday of the mother or the father whosoever is older. This benefit will continue till the beneficiary attains the age of 60 years after which they would be entitled to Old Age Allowance.
- An incentive based scheme **'Ladli'** has been introduced by the State Government to combat the problem of female foeticide. Under the scheme, which is applicable August 20, 2005 onwards, on the birth of second daughter Rs. 5000 per year are given to the new born girl and her mother for five years.

The Haryana Government is committed towards the betterment of women.

Deeply concerned about the adverse sex-ratio, the State Government has taken a number of initiatives to arrest this trend. Many incentive based schemes have been implemented to bring about a constructive change in the mindset of the people and to impart dignity to the girl child. An environment is being created so that a girl child can achieve her potential.

Bhupinder Singh Hooda
Chief Minister, Haryana



IPRDH

sector are in conflict with each other." He felt that it was paradoxical to have both taxes and subsidies on the same petroleum products.

If the Centre and States agree to abolish all taxes on petroleum products, there will be no need for subsidy. The fiscal deficit will decline. So will prices.

The petroleum sector's contribution to the Central and State exchequers aggregated a whopping Rs 183,861 crore in 2009-10, which is more than three times the projected subsidy of Rs 53,000 crore for four PSUs to be jointly borne by the Centre and PSUs in the current fiscal!

Subsidization of 4 PSPs is thus a myth perpetuated by tax-greedy governments that have repeatedly failed to honour their own commitments in the area of hydrocarbon reforms.

The blame for prices-subsidy complexity lies more with greed for taxes than with the global oil price shocks. Successive governments manipulated taxes periodically to garner additional tax revenue. They never bothered to set aside a part of petroleum tax revenue to create PSF.

THE dogged refusal to set up PSF is the primary cause for abortion of MDP. In the APM era, the global price volatility was cushioned by Oil Pool Account (OPA), which was disbanded in 2002 as a part of the APM phase-out.

PSF, which was proposed by an official experts' committee in 2001, has found an echo in the joint study by Petrofed and IIM, Ahmedabad, titled "A Study of the Fiscal Regime for the Petroleum Sector in the Context of Rising Input Prices, of the Changes Required in the Sector, and of a Plan of Action to Achieve the Same". Completed in December 2009, the study recommended setting up of a crude stabilization fund as a second option under hydrocarbons reforms, the first option being total price decontrol. It suggested the government pay kerosene and LPG subsidy directly to the people living below the poverty line as vouchers, smart cards or in any other appropriate manner.

PIB

Former Finance Minister P Chidambaram says it is paradoxical to have both taxes and subsidies on the same petroleum products.

It was proposed that decontrol should be accompanied by restructuring of all central indirect taxes into a value added tax (VAT) and allowing input credit for all registered intermediate users of petro products. The study feels the Union government can protect its revenue by working out a revenue neutral value VAT. It estimated this rate as 110-120 per cent of value added uniformly to all segments in the industry. "Such a tax regime would also be neutral to the degree of vertical integration and remove the biases in the use of products," the study suggests.

Its most interesting conclusion is that "Prices of all major products would settle down to around today's diesel prices with very little difference between petrol, diesel and kerosene closing the large price arbitrage options (diversion and adulteration) that exist today." It has also proposed abolition of all state taxes such as entry tax and turnover tax that are not currently vatable. Sales taxes which are currently vatable and are under VAT should continue as such with far greater uniformity across States. The Centre should try for outright uniformity through a standard VAT rate.

The key to hydrocarbon reforms should emerge in the coming months from the joint decision by the Centre and the States on the extent and manner in which the proposed goods and services tax (GST) is applied to petroleum products. With rational application of GST, pricing of petroleum products would continue to remain in the domain of political expediency. g

ACCESS

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Actual site picture of Balaghat mine, MOIL Limited

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Rs. in million

Audited and Restated Standalone Results for the Year Ended March 31st				1st Qtr. Ended
Particulars	**2007-08**	**2008-09**	**2009-10**	**30.06.2010**
Total Income	10,154.48	14,394.09	10,878.53	3,729.17
Net Sales	9,775.38	12,933.44	9,693.95	3,509.69
Profit Before Tax	7,349.06	10,067.56	7,067.93	2,727.95
Net Profit	4,798.15	6,637.93	4,663.46	1,824.74
Share Capital	280.00	280.00	1,680.00	1,680.00
Reserves & Surplus	7,582.54	12,929.43	15,087.16	16,919.63
Dividends	966.00	1,330.00	940.80	-
Basic EPS (Rs.)	27.47	41.09	27.72	10.91
Diluted EPS (Rs.)	27.47	41.09	27.72	10.91
Book Value	46.80	78.63	99.80	110.71

*Source: IMC-JORC Report, dated September 21, 2010, Resources: measured (37.20 MT), indicated (24.47 MT) and inferred (7.94 MT) mineral resources of manganese ore as of July 1, 2010

**by volume in fiscal 2008, Source: Indian Bureau of Mines, Indian Mineral Yearbook 2008

***in fiscal 2008, Source: Indian Bureau of Mines, Indian Mineral Yearbook 2008

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Manmohan Singh with Kalmadi (in striped T-shirt): Prime Minister's special headache

Rise of the

India's institutions are being replaced

by **MG Devasahayam**

THE 101-medal, Rs 71,000-crore "best-ever Commonwealth Games" have made India a "super-super power" dreaming of hosting the Olympics in the near future – perhaps at 50 times that cost! The Indian and global sports mafia, thriving on such dreams, must be salivating!

Amidst the euphoria, it was easy to miss the Global Hunger Index for 2010 ranking India 67th out of 84 developing countries, well below Sudan, North Korea and even Pakistan. And the "Commonwealth or Common Hunger" report of Save the Children says: "India may rank second in the medals tally, but it is on top among the Commonwealth countries as the home to the highest number of underweight children. About 43% of Indian children are underweight, and seven million under five are severely malnourished."

What the Games meant for the international media and the athletes was aptly put by Agence France-Press (AFP): "From 'toxic' pools to empty stadiums to faulty boxing scales, the Delhi Games has served up daily blunders that have deepened India's embarrassment. The event is the most expensive in the history of the competition, but could set records for another reason: being the most accident and gaffe-prone."

The Global Financial Integrity Report authentically talks of a whopping $125 billion (Rs 575,000 crore) of this "stolen money" having been siphoned off from India by "corrupt politicians and officials" between 2000 and 2008. The Report goes on to say: "As money flows, however, the poor continue to stay poor.... Both corrupt political and corporate officers manage to siphon off funds – intended to aid the people – to political and private sector elite. "

Corruption ranges from the level of the pettiest political party functionary working in tandem with the minions of government to the highest in the land, be it politics, bureaucracy, police or business. Volumes can be written about this rottenness of governance, ransacking of the state exchequer, ravaging of public funds and horrendous standard of public morality that has engulfed India. All this raises the question: Is India a kleptocracy?

Kleptocracy is a Greek-derived term applied to a ruling establishment that takes advantage of governmental corruption to extend the personal wealth and political power of government officials and the ruling class (collectively, kleptocrats) via embezzlement of state funds at the expense of the wider populace, sometimes without even the pretence of honest service. The term means "rule by thieves". It is a pejorative term for governments perceived to have a particularly severe and systemic problem of misappropriation of public funds by those in power.

Judging by the shady goings-on in the corridors of power and the massive scandals involving 2G Spectrum, the Commonwealth Games, the Vedanta Group and the Civil Aviation Ministry, India does seem to have turned into a kleptocracy. Even GenNext is aware of this, as this blogger indicates: "Sadly, scams and frauds have become a part of everyday life. There's the Commonwealth Games mess, judges in Andhra Pradesh were recently caught cheating during an exam, doctors are being accused of conducting unnecessary surgeries to earn some extra moolah, seven out of 10 businessmen in general are alleged to be involved in some fraud, there are scams in the abode of Lord Venkateshwara in Tirupati and let's not even go into the political scams. From Madhu Koda to Telecom Minister A Raja, the Galli brothers in Karnataka and many more political biggies, nobody seems to be above board or on the right

Volumes can be written about this ransacking of the state exchequer, ravaging of public funds and horrendous standard of public morality engulfing India.

PIB

Lackadaisical work at Games stadium: early warning symbol of larger corruption

KLEPTOLORD

by individual or dynastic hegemony

side of the law."

This is kleptocracy in its rawest form that has a distinct *modus operandi*. The holders of political power, for the benefit of themselves and their cohorts, commandeer the resources of the state i.e. the resources produced by "we the people", to a shocking extent. This is evidenced from the way a charade called "reforms" is being pursued by the government elite, throwing open everything – infrastructure, land, forest, beaches, farming, banks, insurance, mines, education, retail trade – for private/foreign ownership. The result is the loot described in the Global Financial Integrity Report.

While democracy subsists on its vibrant institutions, kleptocracy thrives on their destruction and replacement by individual or dynastic hegemony. This is what is precisely happening in India. Constitution is the charter of India's governance. It is a comprehensively written document that has established some of the finest institutions of democratic governance in the world. But six decades down the line each of these institutions has become moth-eaten and is fast losing its capacity to govern.

THE institution of Parliament is the ultimate voice of the people of India, 70 per cent of whom live on Rs 20 a day. But this "temple of democracy" has become a "millionaires' club". Whose voice and will do they represent? What role have they played in protecting democracy and its institutions? At the best of times, not more than 10 per cent of the members attend its sessions. And, thanks to slogan-shouting and perpetual adjournments, Parliament has virtually become non-performing.

The higher judiciary is in ferment with a former Law Minister openly accusing former Chief Justices of India of corruption and the land-grab charges against the former Karnataka Chief Justice and a would-be Supreme Court judge facing an impeachment inquiry.

The Election Commission is in an unenviable situation. None of its recommendations to facilitate "free and fair elections" and ridding the system of criminal and corrupt elements is moving the lawmakers. As if to rub this in, a civil servant indicted by the Shah Commission on Emergency excesses was appointed Election Commissioner and, worse, elevated to Chief Election Commissioner despite severe strictures passed against him by his predecessor in the post. The appointment of the new Chief Vigilance Commissioner also smacks of arbitrariness.

With these institutions withering away it is little wonder that individuals and dynasties are holding sway and kleptocracy is getting entrenched in the country's governance.

In such a system, merit and integrity are the first casualties and competent, honest civil servants are kept at arm's length. Instead, an in-breeding, inward-looking bureaucracy takes over, dancing to the tunes of the kleptolords and pursuing their agenda without demur. A select few are rewarded with coveted postings during service and plush post-retirement sinecures. Others are made "Independent Directors" in multinational and blue-chip companies with lucrative "sitting fees" running into lakhs of rupees. The only requirement is that the civil servant should be willing to sell his soul.

Why cannot an FIR be registered straightaway, the main culprits arrested and subjected to custodial interrogation so that the truth emerges as it is? A small-time criminal is subjected to such treatment, so why not the mega-criminals? Is it because India is not a functioning democracy, but a dysfunctional kleptocracy? The people need an answer. g

Merit, integrity are the casualties and honest civil servants are kept at arm's length. An in-breeding bureaucracy dances to the tunes of the kleptolords.

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The Last Post for

The trend in democratic nations is to downsize armies,

by **Col R Hariharan**

THESE are not happy days for armies in the democratic world. Their influence on national policymaking is waning as the scope and content of national security grows well beyond physical security. The process is not uniform and varies with historical military traditions and the ethos of different nations.

At one end is Turkey, a recent convert to democracy, where the army was the self-appointed guardian of secularism. In the past, whenever its primacy was threatened, the army came down hard on civilian rulers. A referendum has voted for Constitutional reforms to curtail the powers of the military. The package of reforms put up by the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) aims at making the armed forces more accountable to civil courts. This is happening in spite of the army's well-founded suspicion that the AKP is a fellow traveller of Islamic fundamentalists.

At the other end are countries like Sweden and Norway with armies populated largely by short-term compulsory service cadres with only a sprinkling of career soldiers. In the West, as memories of the Cold War fade, most armies are leading a hand-to-mouth existence.

The British military, which once built up "the Empire on which the sun never sets", today seems to have endless woes. A Ministry of Defence survey of 10,500 Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force personnel in 2009 was revealing. Most suffered from low morale and major concerns over the military equipment they used on the frontline in Afghanistan. Gen Richard Dannat, Chief of General Staff, went public about the state of his troops fighting in Afghanistan. He spoke of poor pay and acute shortage of essential equipment, including helicopters, for soldiers in operation. Prime Minister Gordon Brown did not take it kindly; his government denied the outspoken General appointment as the Chief of Defence Staff.

The case of the Russian armed forces was no better till President Vladimir Putin pulled them out of the morass of low esteem and shortages. In the US, the role of the military that went up during President George W Bush's tenure is now being pruned by his successor, Barack Obama. In keeping with his election promise to pull back troops from Afghanistan, Obama's national strategic policy of 2010 talks of giving diplomacy, rather than the military, a larger role in the US's global power projection. The President substantiated this by sacking General McChrystal, commander of the US forces in Afghanistan, when the General made public his differences with Washington's war strategy.

In South Asia, countries have used armies as tools for sustaining governments characterized by poor governance and political corruption. These armies with their colonial baggage were useful in crushing extremism and insurgencies. The Indian National Congress came to power after its struggle for freedom under Gandhi's leadership succeeded, and this probably influenced the early perception of the army's role as watchdog of the rulers rather than guardian of national security.

There was perhaps also suspicion about the former colonial army's readiness to function under an elected civilian government. This is probably what prompted Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to write a letter to General Lockhart, commander-in-chief, two days before India became independent. He wrote: "In any policy that is to be pursued, in the Army or otherwise, the views of the Government of India and the policy they lay down must prevail. If any person is unable to lay down that policy, he has no place in the Indian Army or in the Indian structure of Government." While the armed forces have been following this dictum, successive governments failed to lay down policies not only on national security but also on a host of issues related to security forces and their competency.

The progressive downgrading of

In South Asia, most countries have used their armies as tools for sustaining governments characterized by poor governance and political corruption.

PIB

Three service chiefs: deserving salute

the soldier

by choice or necessity

armed forces officers in the bureaucratic barometer of order of precedence reflects this mindset. The roller coaster downslide has now put the Army chief on a par with the Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission. This is more than symbolic.

EVEN in defence policymaking, India is one country where the service chiefs are only on listening watch. This, in spite of the use of the armed forces continually for six decades in both external and internal wars of many hues. Even now, India's National Security Council (modelled on its US counterpart), presided over by the Prime Minister, has, besides the National Security Adviser, the ministers of Defence, External Affairs, Home, and Finance, and the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission as members. Contrast this with President Obama's National Security Council which has the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a statutory attendee.

So it is not surprising that even issues concerning the combat readiness of the armed forces stagnate for want of timely decision-making. It has become routine to recast the recommendations of successive pay commissions (with only civil bureaucrats as members) on armed forces pay and allowances after the service chiefs complain about them. Veterans have been treated shabbily and we see them taking to the streets to remind the government of unfulfilled promises.

A career in the armed forces is no more a popular occupation the world over. And India is no exception. With the technology boom triggering growth, the better class of people is reluctant to bear the hardship of serving in the Indian Army, deployed in difficult areas. A huge shortage of officers is affecting morale, especially as officers are always expected to deliver regardless of such problems.

In spite of all this, the armed forces strive to meet the near impossible expectations of the rulers and the public. People forget that soldiers come from the same society in which corruption, absence of rule of law and human rights violations have become endemic. Twelve months of military training alone cannot completely change the mindset of soldiers coming from rural societies steeped in caste prejudices and politics and human rights violations. Unless there is social change, we cannot expect the armed forces to be insulated forever from pernicious influences.

Added to this is the problem of employing the Army in counterinsurgency operations. In such situations, the armed forces have become the whipping boys for national maladies, mostly because it is convenient. Those who criticize the Army for highhandedness forget that, since 1990, as many as 1,473 of 1,511 cases of human rights violation or abuse levelled against security forces personnel have been proved false after investigation. Traditionally, military leaders maintain a low profile unlike politicians or the intellectual class. If the service chiefs comment on vital issues affecting their professional competence or national security, the bureaucracy and politicians get restive and the media frowns.

Take the case of New Delhi's latest discovery that the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, and not inept governance or bankrupt policies, is at the root of the unrest in the Kashmir Valley. So the government is seriously considering repeal of the Act in parts of Kashmir. Not one leader has the moral courage to condemn the political leaders inciting the riotous mobs carrying out *intifida* – a form of indirect warfare. Besides, 104 personnel have been punished. It is easy for policymakers to forget that, between 1988 and the first seven months of 2010, 5962 security personnel have lost their lives in Kashmir. Can soldiers forget? g

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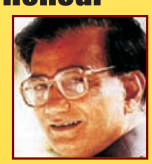

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'Development is the only answer to tackling Naxalism'

An officer at the grassroots level shares innovative development schemes for tribals

THE right approach to tackling Naxalism can be illustrated by this incident at Lohri, where a few months ago a carnage had taken place when the Naxalites attacked a police party. We decided to hold a social security awareness campaign in the villages. But the Naxalites sent out warnings against it and closed the main road to traffic. The *tehsildar* and his team could not make it to the campaign function. When I asked him about it, the *tehsildar* replied, "Sir, I tried to come. But the Naxalites had put a huge tree across the road. I moved it aside, my vehicle passed and then I moved the tree back across the road and returned home."

The question is not whether lack of development has given rise to Naxalism or Naxalism has given rise to lack of development. Why are 13- and 14-year-old tribals picking up SLRs and INSAS rifles? Because they get paid Rs 1,500 and get food and clothing. They don't even know who Mao is. It is the fire in the belly that drives them to arms.

Naxalism is directly proportional to the forest area. And inversely proportional to the urbanized area. On a much broader scale, we do need to ask the question as to whether the administration and the political executive have delivered on the development model adopted.

Rambling thinking with respect to development, and disjointed or poor development have fuelled Naxalism. There have been discrepancies, mismatches and neglect of vital aspects of development while drawing up development plans in regions. The gap of inequality has been widening between the tribal havenots and others.

The problem has nothing to do with ideology. Nandurbar, Amravati, Gondia and Thane are tribal districts. Between 1993 and 1998, Melghat region in Amravati district came into the limelight because of malnutrition-related deaths of tribal infants. Why is Naxalism not thriving there?

Today, Naxalism is taking a totally different path. Rather than talking about the oppressed, the Naxalites are talking about overthrowing the state. The line between the oppressed and the oppressor are very hard to differentiate. For the Naxalites, Gadchiroli comes in the path of their so-called march towards New Delhi in their bid to capture power there in 2030. Gadchiroli lies in the "Red Corridor" between Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. The government has now agreed to procure modern weapons and equipment to tackle the Naxalite menace.

But development is the only answer. We cannot overnight attain the level of progress of the US. We can attain it slowly. The problems are many. The Human Development Index (HDI) is the lowest in intra-State terms. Agriculture is non-sustainable. The monetary benefits of government schemes cannot reach the tribals as the banking network is not that widespread in the district. As many as 720 tribal villages are not covered by the mobile network.

The tribals here are so poor that they cannot even afford to pay for the subsidized health, electricity, housing and food schemes of the government. One tribal development officer based at divisional headquarters in Nagpur looked after five districts in the State. So the additional District Collector is now Member Secretary of the district-level committee to monitor implementation of development work.

After taking over as District Collector,

Today, Naxalism is taking a totally different path. Rather than talking about the oppressed, the Naxalites are talking about overthrowing the state.

Why are the 13- and 14-year-old tribals picking up SLRs and INSAS rifles? Because they get paid Rs 1,500 and get food and clothing.

I advocated the need for convergence of the Forest Rights Act, 2006, and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). Under the provisions of the Forest Act, tribals were being denied the right to sell even minor forest produce. I allowed them to sell it in the open market.

Seventy-eight per cent of the district's economy is forest-related. Those whose lives are dependent on the forests should be made essential partners in natural resource planning, conservation and protection. Only then can we overcome the problem of Naxalism.

With the help of the agriculture department, we have implemented a tree plantation programme under which the tribals are being given saplings free. They also get ownership rights. After the first three years, they can sell the produce in the open market. I have also advocated allowing Women's Self Help Groups (SHGs) as units in MGNREGS.

Land has always been at the centre of the concept of development. I have tried to move this centre of development away from the district headquarters to the remote and border areas of the district. There have been problems of connectivity and trained technical manpower. Just the other day the Naxalites burnt one of our vehicles engaged in GPS mapping.

To ameliorate the conditions that the tribals live in, I have begun implementation of the e-Health, e-Disha and e-Vidya schemes. Project Dhannankur is aimed primarily at tackling Naxalism head-on. In remote tribal villages, especially during the monsoons, speedy access to health services was a problem. We have placed ambulances at strategic places so that minimum time is lost in rendering medical aid to the tribals.

For this we have come up with a smart card that allows us to keep track online of the health of tribals. Under Project Kayakalp we aim to provide health services with a more human touch. The government has also enhanced the powers of the Divisional and Assistant Conservator of Forests to sanction development work for tribals.

During my decade-long bureaucratic career, I have had the chance to turn around several things. The other day, my presentation on the multi-pronged action plan of development for tackling Naxalism was well received at the meeting of the State Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Ashokrao Chavan. The Cabinet has given a green signal to proposals to modernize the local police force for tackling Naxalism.

As Managing Director of the State Minerals and Mining Corporation, Nagpur, I managed to turn the loss-making entity into a profit-making corporation in 2008. The corporation earned a profit of Rs 100 crore then, now it proudly owns captive coal mines in other States and has even begun exporting minerals.

During the 2009 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, several of the initiatives that we took in managing the polls were appreciated. We adopted an election management plan which was based on randomization. We categorized election staff on the basis of their age and then assigned them duties, gave time slots for polling parties to reach the polling stations, conduct the elections and report back in a sort of relay mechanism. For the first time, the polling parties could stay overnight in the cloakroom of a nearby railway station. Many of our other initiatives regarding election funding and such matters have been adopted by the Election Commission of India in these Bihar Assembly elections. The Chief Election Commissioner, Dr SY Quraishi, made special mention of our innovative methods in election management at the EC's regional conference recently in Goa.

Handling such a sensitive and challenging assignment comes with strings attached. Being the District Collector of Gadchiroli, I have to live with Z Plus security cover. g

(As told to Prashant Hamine)

Bombay, 1964: Prohibiti

When common sense eludes lawmakers

I came to Bombay – as the city was then called, and what I still call it – in 1964 to take up my first job, as an Assistant Editor of *The Times of India*. I was full of idealism and respect for the law, as most educated people in their early 20s were. That respect was tested straightaway: Prohibition was in force in Maharashtra, a hangover from when the self-righteous and urine-imbibing Morarji Desai had been Chief Minister.

You could drink alcohol in the privacy of your home, but only if you had a "permit". And how did you get a "permit"? I made enquiries and found that, in my case, since I had recently returned from the UK, all I needed was a letter from a doctor to say that during my stint abroad I had been corrupted by the West and got addicted to alcohol, with the sad result that I could not do without it! In other words, I needed it on health grounds. A letter to this effect was signed by some nondescript doctor whom I had not met and sent to the relevant authorities.

Soon, the magical "permit" materialized, allowing me to purchase four "units" of alcohol a month from an authorized liquor shop (one unit was a regular bottle of spirits, or four bottles of beer). I think I paid Rs 150 for that "permit", a fairly high amount in those days, considering my salary, even as an assistant editor, was Rs 450 and the charge for staying as a paying guest Rs 200 a month.

The tout who organized all this told me that the actual charge for the "permit" was nominal (Rs 10, I seem to recall) and that the rest was shared by the doctor and a rung of officials and politicians – with a cut going to himself, needless to say. Those were the days of illegal bars or "auntys", as they were popularly called, where all kinds of alcoholic concoctions were available.

Illustration by ARUNA

I went to quite a few "auntys" with my friends. As the saying goes, forbidden fruits taste sweeter. Often, you did not know what you were drinking since the stuff came from stills where a variety of vile ingredients were used. Many imbibers would fall sick regularly and quite a few died. Some of the illegal hooch was transported by lepers, as the police was reluctant to search them. There would be the occasional police raid on the stills and the "auntys", but everybody knew this was only for show and that the police were on the take. In

on and its wake

fact, all those involved were on the take – doctors, officials and politicians.

One particular section of society benefited most from Prohibition: the underworld. Crime became big-time in Bombay during Prohibition. A powerful nexus developed then between the underworld, the police and politicians. It is still there.

We should have learnt from the US. There, too, a strong moralistic streak in the American psyche led the government to impose Prohibition. It was an unmitigated disaster. Crime and corruption flourished. Those were the days of gangsters like Al Capone. The patriarch of the famed Kennedy family made his riches through Prohibition. Fortunately, better sense eventually prevailed in the US and India (with the exception of Gujarat, of course) and Prohibition was lifted.

This piece means no disrespect to the memory of Mahatma Gandhi, under whose main influence the policy was implemented in India. He had his reasons, the primary one being concern for the poor. He argued – and it was doubtless true – that on payday, many wage-earners tended to blow up their salaries on booze, leaving the family destitute. The answer to that, however, I would argue, is not an outright ban – which never works – but education and driving home the importance of temperance.

Prohibitionists tend to lump drinking with drunkenness. Desai felt that anybody who drank must be an alcoholic. In his killjoy, tunnel vision, there was no appreciation of anybody enjoying the occasional glass of wine or a peg of whisky in convivial company, in a restaurant or at a party at home. I hold nothing against teetotallers but at the same time they should hold nothing against my drinking, as long as I do not make a nuisance of myself.

Apart from crime and corruption, Prohibition brought with it something else that was almost as insidious: disrespect for the law.

In my view, apart from the crime and corruption Prohibition brought with it in the US and India, something else that was almost as insidious came as well: disrespect for the law.

We were normally law-abiding youngsters in Bombay in the 1960s, yet we were confronted by a law that was both stupid and unenforceable. We broke it by drinking illegally in illegal bars. Thereby, even if in a small way, we became law-breakers. You break one law, however senseless it may be, and you begin to lose respect for other laws as well. That was the tragedy of Prohibition. And it still is.

Let me explain. Believe it or not, in Maharashtra you still require a "permit" to drink, buy, or even possess alcohol. The "permit" costs less than Rs 200 a year, I believe, and is easily available (no doctor's letter required now). But relatively few people bother to get it. Yet, shops sell them liquor (except they don't give a receipt) and most bars and hotels serve them drinks.

Why not get rid of these stupid "permits"? Only one reason I can fathom: the State does not want to lose the revenue it earns from them! Meanwhile, it was once pointed out in the Assembly that anybody flying in from abroad and buying duty-free alcohol at Bombay airport and taking the alcohol outside the airport is actually breaking the law if he does not have a "permit". There was no suitable answer to that from the authorities. Do I have to use the word "stupid" yet again for the Maharashtra government? g

The writer, a former Editor of The Reader's Digest *and* The Indian Express, *can be reached at singh.84@hotmail.com*

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'ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT EXPERIENCES IN LIFE IS TO BE FREE'

Lal Bahadur Shastri's nephew recalls being a reluctant bureaucrat, yearning to join JP, and setting up MTNL

MY mother, Sundari Devi, was the sister of Lal Bahadur Shastri. She was a Bihar MLA for about 18 years. My father, Shambhu Sharan, was the nephew of Jayaprakash Narayan. My father died when I was a month old in 1931. Shastri then took us to Allahabad, where we lived for six or seven years until our house was built in Patna and we shifted.

After BA from Patna University and MA from Allahabad University, I casually appeared for an admission test of the London School of Economics. Amazingly, I got through. In England, I spent Rs 400 a month. It was 13 rupees to a pound and I spent 30 pounds a month. Everything was cheap. Land and assets were also cheap. My family had to sell two pieces of land – one in Champaran, the other in Patna – for my education. They sold the land for a song. Today it would be worth crores of rupees.

I did BSc Economics there. LSE certainly made the man inside me. Europe put steel into you, partly because you had to compete with white people who had an air of supremacy, partly because we had just become independent.

Then I started on my Bar-at-Law. Because of my connections, a whole lot of people took great care of us. There was this Finance Minister in Bihar, A Narayan Sinha. He came to England and told me to go back to India.

He said, "What will you do by becoming a barrister? The zamindari is gone, so who will be your paymaster?" He told me my mother needed me. I obeyed and left law. At that time London was a centre for the IAS exam. I took the exam and got selected.

There is, in India, an intolerance of dissent. And we don't value independence, we value dependence. So every bureaucrat likes to have a subordinate who is not independent but dependent on him. I have been a great votary of independence, partly because I was educated abroad and partly because of my family influences.

One of the most difficult experiences in life is to be free, to enjoy and properly use your freedom. Nobody really wants to be free. They want to be slaves of a well-ordered system provided by society.

I wanted to quit the IAS a number of times. The first time was in 1974 when JP started his movement. I felt I was not doing enough for my people. Since the time I was very young, I had worshipped JP. But my mother implored me not to quit.

The Babri imbroglio: Vajpayee, Advani, Mulayam

I was deeply involved in the Babri Masjid issue. In a meeting with the vice-president of the Muslim Personal Law Board, Dr Syed Kalbe Sadiq, I put forth four suggestions: (1) Rebuild the Babri Masjid where it was. (2) Nothing will be constructed at the site. (3) Build in partnership. (4) As an act of grace and goodwill, give the land to the Hindus on the promise that such demands won't be made anywhere else in the country. He agreed but asked who would be the guarantor. I said the people of the country were the biggest guarantor. I told Atal Bihari Vajpayee of the meeting. I saw another side of Vajpayee. He said he would agree to the fourth proposal. He said, "*BJP ka saashan ka khatra iss desh mein agaya hai. Unko saashan ki kala nahin aati.*" He then asked me to talk to Advani. I said, "Advan*ji*, you mean to say that for Hindus it has gone beyond the communal and touched a deep religious chord." Yes, he said. I replied, "You forget that for Muslims too it has touched a deep religious chord." He was floored by my answer. He said he had wept only twice in his life – when JP was expelled from the Janata Dal and when the Babri

RAJEEV DABRAL

We don't value independence, we value dependence. So every bureaucrat likes to have a subordinate who is not independent but dependent on him.

JP's movement was beautiful. Possibly, you will never see such a thing again. I wish Nehru had found ways of regular exchange of ideas with him. The worth of the man was first discovered by Gandhi who said there was nothing about socialism which JP didn't know.

In the 1980s, corruption was at its peak. Again, I had a strong urge to leave. I consulted Madhu Dandavate and VP Singh. Dandavate said I should resign on a public issue. I also met Satyendra Narayan Sinha who later became CM of Bihar. He said, "Don't quit, come to Bihar and help."

Before leaving for Bihar, I was Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Communications. I had discovered that 40 per cent of Indian traffic either lands or originates in four metros. So I suggested to VN Gadgil, who had been my classmate in LSE, that these metros be clubbed and a corporation be formed. That's how MTNL was born, despite strong opposition from telecom department officials. Rajiv Gandhi supported the idea and appointed the Geeta Masjid was demolished. I don't believe the latter.

Then I went to the RSS. They were interested but said they could respond only months later. The fourth person I met was Acharya Giriraj Kishore of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. He said, "*Badle mein kya dena? Unko to mafi mangni chahiye ki unhone Babri Masjid wahan banaya kyun.*" I said, Sorry, I have come to the wrong place and have nothing to say to you.

Then I went to Ali Mian and told him of my interactions. He asked me to write down my proposals and pursue the issue with Vajpayee, who, he said, was a good man. I pursued the matter with Vajpayee who hesitated and procrastinated for a while and then Mulayam Singh Yadav won the election and he is his own kind of politician. It suits him to fight the community's fight. If Mulayam had not come to power, I would have continued pursuing Vajpayee and pushed it through. Mulayam couldn't bear the idea of anyone achieving the goal which was meant for him to achieve and so I put the issue aside for better times.

The recent verdict of the court is beautiful. You can't have a better judgement, made with foresight and in the best spirit of communal accommodation. To dismiss it on petty grounds would be foolish.

Krishnan committee to assess it. But politics played a part. Two metros were left out because they had non-Congress governments – Calcutta and Madras.

When I went back to Bihar, I was asked to choose between the Development Commissioner's post and the Department of Revenue. I chose the former. Next, they wanted to bypass the Chief Secretary's post and make me Deputy Chairman of the Planning Board in Bihar with the status of State Minister and finally upgrade it to Cabinet Minister. I said, if the Chief Minister wanted to make me a Cabinet Minister, he should do it through the front door and not the back door. They said, How is that possible. I said, If it's not possible, I won't do it. So I took voluntary retirement.

In 1989, after quitting, I joined VP Singh's Janata Dal. That was when the whole reservation affair started. The party broke up and Chandra Shekhar formed the government. VP Singh committed a mistake. Several times we tried to argue with him. What this country needs is need-based reservation and merit-based appointment. It will automatically go in favour of the lower castes. You don't have to call them lower castes. But VP saw political advantage in calling them by their caste names.

JP's movement was beautiful. Possibly, you will never see such a thing again. I wish Nehru had found ways of regular exchange of ideas with him.

Chandra Shekhar had a doubtful reputation. But he had a genuine feeling for the poor. He realised the importance of money in politics. Funding of political parties, collecting funds is one of the unsolved problems of politics. Under him the party didn't have a good name. The Janata Dal would have survived had Ram Sundar Das, who was a good man with a clean record, continued as Chief Minister. But Lalu Prasad Yadav took over in 1990. And 15 years were a total loss.

OCCASIONALLY, we demonstrated against Lalu. I did a *padyatra* in Champaran in 1995. For sometime I was also with the Lok Shakti party of Ramakrishna Hegde. Unfortunately, he decided to join with the BJP. I was very embarrassed about it. We stuck together for two elections.

I divided my time between politics and working with JPites, very intelligent people. They accepted me as a person but not as a political actor. They would not trust me with an office. My purpose in life was not holding political office but to bring about reform. So I quit politics.

I was talking to Naxalites in Bihar and made good progress. I used to arrange meetings between the CPI(ML) and democratic socialists. Despite my faith in democracy, I sometimes believe Marx's theory of dictatorship of the proletariat. I have been impressed with Naxalites' clarity of mind and knowledge of Marxism. I met a group of them in Hyderabad. During discussions, I raised the question of incipient fascism. All over India, fascism was budding. Jayalalithaa in Tamil Nadu, Narendra Modi in Gujarat, Mayawati in UP, Lalu in Bihar – they are all incipient fascists. I pointed out to the Naxalites that, according to them, fascism is a more serious danger than capitalism and challenged them to fight fascism.

My interactions with Naxalites led to a CID inquiry against me by the Andhra Pradesh government. Somebody called my son and asked him how I managed funds to travel to Hyderabad. My son was furious. He warned me that they might try to implicate me in some case. But they stopped probing. My Shastri connection always acted as a shield.

I now run two organizations – Awami Eka Manch and Lok Paksh. The members are Patna-based elite but of progressive mindset. We had lots to do when Lalu was in power. Now I am taking it easy, at 79 years of age.

As told to Kh. Manglembi Devi and Kallol Dey

'The IAS must learn to be humble'

AN IAS officer has great potential for good provided he has the courage of conviction and tries to decide things in anticipation of government approval. He is not a pen-pusher. He must decide things and solve the problem at the roots. The IAS members have sold their souls. In my moments of anger, I feel the IAS should be disbanded.

The IAS is not meant for very capable and highly intelligent people. It did a sterling job immediately after independence. The post-independence challenges required a very distinguished body of civil servants to tackle them. The IAS also rises to crisis situations beautifully. But the problem is that it carries within itself the arrogance of an ignoramus. There are other people who are equally sensitive about crises and they should get them to work with them. The IAS must learn to be humble, must go out and get involved in ground realities.

As for governance in this country, one cannot run a government in India without deep compassion.

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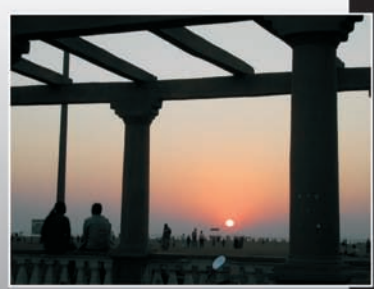

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INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT

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Re-enter the markets at every correction

THE overwhelming response that the Coal India IPO – India's largest-ever share sale – received has further strengthened the view that the markets may remain strong in the days to come. This is despite the striking similarities with January 2008 when the Reliance Power IPO got an unprecedented response preceded by a sharp rally in the stock markets due to heavy FII inflows coupled with the uncertain global scenario. However, Coal India failed to get the kind of response Reliance Power did from the retail investors.

The market reaction to the corporate results for Q2 was lukewarm. It might be because the markets ran up sharply in September in expectation of a robust performance. The corporate results have also brushed aside the concerns reflected by the sharp decline in IIP to 5.6 per cent in August compared to the revised figure of around 15 per cent for July 2010. However, with slow credit growth and the investment cycle not picking up, momentum remains an area of concern.

FIIs have by now invested a record $24 billion (Rs 1.07 trillion) in Indian equities in this year alone. According to analysts, this is in view of the second round of monetary easing likely to be announced soon by the Fed that may witness some more upside for the Indian markets. The latest Global Financial Stability Report of the IMF points to a secular shift in asset allocation in favour of emerging markets that is likely to be a long-term trend and will be far more sustainable. Also, it is not just the institutional investors, the retail investors have also been increasing their bets on emerging markets that may get a further boost if the Indian government gives the go-ahead for direct entry of foreign retail investors to its markets.

Inflation, particularly food inflation, and increasing current account deficit that is expected to touch 3 per cent of GDP during this fiscal remain the two major areas of concern for the Indian economy. This, coupled with steady appreciation in the rupee, increases India's vulnerability to external shocks that may lead to sudden reversal of flows. The foreign exchange reserves of $265 billion do provide a reasonable cushion. Despite this, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee ha cautioned that the developing countries have exhausted their policy buffers built over the years and will not be able to show the same resilience in the face of another shock.

Markets are trading at more than 18 times the estimated earnings for FY 2010-11 compared to the average of 12 times for emerging markets. Analysts are also watching the ongoing currency wars and their likely impact on India with their fingers crossed. However, in view of the low retail participation and the domestic funds waiting for a healthy correction, the downside may be limited. The in-principle approval of a proposal for investing some of the EPF corpus in the stock markets is widely welcomed by the market players. Despite all this, small investors are advised to continue booking profits to re-enter at every sharp correction.

Markets are trading at more than 18 times the estimated earnings for FY 2010–11 compared to the average of 12 times for emerging markets.

Ahmednagar Forgings
(CMP Rs 152)

THE company, owned by the Amtek group with a majority 62.57 per cent stake acquired in 2002, is the largest forging manufacturer in the small and medium component segment and is engaged in manufacture of high precision closed die steel forgings and auto components primarily for the automotive sector and also for the defence and railway industries. Major customers include Fairfield Atlas, Cummins, King Automotive Systems, Letchworth, Zelter GmbH and Hennef.

In a scenario wherein auto ancillary stocks have moved up sharply and many have got overvalued, the stock is yet to participate in the rally. The company has shown a steady improvement in turnover, profits and EPS over the past several quarters. The TTM EPS of Rs 17.33 discounts the CMP by a PE of just 8.75 as against the industry PE of 42. With a Book Value of Rs 142, the P/BV is just one. Its market-cap to sales and operating profit ratios are just 0.2 and 0.91, respectively. Since the company has a substantial unutilized capacity and the auto boom is likely to continue, powered by strong domestic demand, the company should post an EPS of around Rs 22-25 for the full year (July-June 2011) giving a discounting of just around 6. The share is reasonably undervalued and can be accumulated with a 1- to 2-year time horizon to get very decent returns. The stock is a potential bonus candidate also. g

The author has no exposure in the stock recommended in this column. gfiles *does not accept responsibility for investment decisions by readers of this column. Investment-related queries may be sent to gfilesindia@gmail.com with Dr Sood's name in the subject line.*

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The 1976-batch IAS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre has been appointed Secretary, Department of Official Languages, in the Government of India.

ANIL KUMAR
The 1976-batch IAS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre has been appointed Secretary, Planning Commission.

SUMIT BOSE
The 1976-batch IAS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre, Secretary Disinvestment in the Government of India, has been inducted into the Board of Governors of Doon School.

ARUNA SUNDARAJAN
The 1982-batch IAS officer of the Kerala cadre has joined the Government of India as Joint Secretary, Housing and Poverty Alleviation.

PRABHAT KUMAR
The 1991-batch IFS officer has been shifted in MEA as Joint Secretary.

KK PATHAK
The 1990-batch IAS officer of the Bihar cadre has been appointed Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs.

AR GHANSHYAM
The 1982-batch IFS officer has been posted in the MEA as Joint Secretary in charge of UNES Division.

SANJIV RANJAN
The 1985-batch IAS officer of the Manipur-Tripura cadre has been appointed Joint Secretary, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, in the Government of India.

RAGHAV CHANDRA
The 1982-batch IAS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre has joined the Government of India as Joint Secretary (Highways) in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

RITESH KUMAR SINGH
The 1996-batch IAS officer of the Karnataka cadre has become Private Secretary to Jaipal Reddy, Minister for Urban Development.

NK SINHA
The 1980-batch IAS officer of the Bihar cadre has been appointed Additional Secretary, Higher Education, in the Department of HRD in the Government of India.

SANJAY KUMAR
The 2002-batch IA&AS officer has been appointed Under Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs.

BANDARU WILSON BABU
The 2004-batch IFS officer has been posted in the MEA as Under Secretary in the Southern Division.

AK AWASTHI
The 1975-batch IA& AS officer has been appointed Dy CAG.

VANDANA GURNANI
The 1991-batch IAS officer has been appointed resident commissioner of Karnataka in New Delhi.

BHAWAR LAL
The 1983-batch IAS officer has been appointed Chief Electoral Officer of Andhra Pradesh.

PRAMOD SHRIPAD PHALNIKAR
The 1989-batch IPS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre has been promoted as IG Western Sector Mumbai, CISF.

RAMESHWAR ORAON
The 1972-batch IPS officer has been appointed Chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes.

SANJEEB KUMAR MISHRA
The 1997-batch IAS officer of the Orissa cadre has joined as Director, Commerce, in Government of India.

SAMIR SAHAI
The 1987-batch IFS officer of the Maharashtra cadre has been appointed Chief Vigilance Officer in the Pawan Hans Helicopter company.

ANIRUDDHA UPPAL
The 1976-batch IPS officer of the Himachal Pradesh cadre has taken over as Special DG, CRPF, J&K.

JAGDISH KISHWAN
The 1975-batch IFS officer has been appointed ADG Wildlife to Government of India.

RAJIV MATHUR
The 1974-batch IPS officer of Chhattisgarh cadre, DG National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) has been appointed as new Director of the National Police Academy, Hyderabad.

RAJAN KATOCH
The 1979-batch IAS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre has been appointed Additional Secretary and FA in the Ministry of Commerce.

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ANUP KUMAR SINGH
The 1994-batch IPS officer of the Maharashtra cadre has been appointed DIG, CRPF.

ROSHNI SEN
The 1993-batch IAS officer of West Bengal cadre has been appointed as Chairperson, Tea Board.

NK TRIPATHI
The 1974-batch IPS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre has been appointed DG of the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB).

NADIM ANWER
The 1995-batch IFS officer has been posted in MEA as Deputy Secretary in PP&R Division.

INDEVAR PANDEY
The 1988-batch IAS officer of the West Bengal cadre has joined the West Bengal government as Secretary, Disaster Management, Kolkata.

AMARJIT SINGH
The 1982-batch IAS officer of Gujarat cadre has been appointed Joint Secretary, School Education and Literacy in the Government of India.

NS NAPALCHYAL
The 1976-batch IAS officer (retd.) has been appointed Chief Information Commissioner in Uttarakhand.

MADHUR VERMA
The 2005-batch IPS officer of AGMUT cadre has joined as Superintendent of Police, Kolasib District, Mizoram.

SNEHLATA AGRAWAL
The 1996-batch IAS officer has joined the Government of India as Director, Census, in Uttarakhand.

RUPA DUTTA
The 1986-batch IES officer has been appointed Director, Child and Women Welfare, in the Government of India.

RAJESH SUMAN
The 1993-batch IFS officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre has been appointed Director in the Ministry of Home Affairs.

MEENAXI ANAND CHAUDHRY
The former Haryana Chief Secretary has been appointed Chief Information Commissioner of the State.

Dabral is Information Commissioner, Uttarakhand

VETERAN journalist Prabhat Dabral has been appointed Information Commissioner of Uttarakhand. He began his career in Janyug, a Hindi daily, as a staff reporter in 1977. He then worked for Sandhya Times and Navbharat Times before joining Doordarshan as a news correspondent. He was an independent producer from 1995 to 1998, after which he joined Sahara Samay as Executive Producer and Vice-President, Sahara TV. He was head of editorial as well as business operations of all Sahara Samay news channels from 1998 till 2007. He worked with the Delhi bureau of GDR TV before the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Dabral was also president of the Press Club of India.

Moving On: ias officers retiring in November 2010

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RN Joshi (1996)
KARNATAKA
N Gokulram (1974)
H Shashidhar (1988)
P Ganeshan (1990)
GN Dhananjaya (1990)
PUNJAB
Iqbal Singh Sidhu (1991)
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MAHARASHTRA
Chandra Iyengar (1973)
SIKKIM
Tseten Dorji (1975)
TAMIL NADU
M Madhavan Nambiar (1974)
S Kosalaraman (1992)
UTTAR PRADESH
Deepika Duggal (1992)
Uday Pratap Singh (1996)
WEST BENGAL
Kalarickad John Koshy (1975)

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Nirupama Rao wished for years, got months

SAD luck for Nirupama Rao! Her diplomacy just did not work on home turf. The search for the new Foreign Secretary has started though there are nearly seven months to go before Rao retires. She was supposed to retire in December 2010 but got an extension till July 2011.

According to South Block

insiders, Rao sought – unsuccessfully – the appointment of her husband, Sudhakar Rao (who retired as Chief Secretary, Karnataka) as Chief Information Commissioner of India. Next, she wanted her term as Foreign Secretary to be extended, like that of the Cabinet Secretary, to four years. South Block gave the matter much thought but finally decided against it. So, keeping in mind the many visits by heads of state scheduled for the remainder of this year and early next year, Rao was given an extension.

Lalli thumbs nose at Meira

LOK Sabha TV has been functioning sans a head. Now, it does not behove a premier channel whose business is public service broadcasting to have anything less than a Director – or, in modern parlance, a CEO. The Lok Sabha Speaker, Meira Kumar, made a sound decision by asking for LD Mandloi, DDG, Doordarshan, to head the TV channel. Mandloi, a former Acting DG of Doordarshan and a celebrated Hindi writer, was an ideal candidate from the reserved category.

But BS Lalli, CEO, Prasar Bharati, refuses to let Mandloi go. Not because he values this highly competent staffer but in sheer defiance for authority, a

trait he is known for. He has apparently stated, "I do not bow before political authority." Paradoxically, he has also said that Meira Kumar was once a junior bureaucrat and he goes by seniority!

Nambiar's London dreams

THE Civil Aviation Secretary, M Madhavan Nambiar, retires in November and, following in the footsteps of other retiring bureaucrats, is

seeking rehabilitation. He set his sights on a chosen post some time ago and pushed his candidature for it. The post was that of Director of the Nehru Centre in London.

Nambiar wanted to replace the current Director, IFS officer Monika Kapil Mohta, as his daughter works in London. The Nehru Centre is controlled by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations under the aegis of the Ministry of External Affairs. Nambiar persuaded the ICCR president, Dr Karan Singh, to recommend him for the post but his London dream was squashed by External Affairs Minister SM Krishna.

Glitz and grime at Doon

DOON School just held Founder's Day and it was a star-studded affair. President Pratibha Patil was the chief guest, and Education Minister Kapil Sibal and the King of Bhutan also attended. Nearly 5,000 former students and guests were at the three-day celebration. But, along with the razzmatazz, some serious issues bubbled just beneath the surface. There has been a running controversy that the school is becoming the playground of the super-rich and out of reach of professionals. It has been hiking fees year after year. Alumni have asked to see auditors' reports justifying these hikes but the school board is not playing ball. Its chairman, chosen by the Indian Public Schools Society, is Max India founder Analjit Singh.

One alumnus, former Chief Information Commissioner Wajahat Habibullah, wrote to

ILLUSTRATIONS: ARUNA

Analjit that even though the Board may not be covered under RTI, it should accede to the request to open up its books to public scrutiny in the interests of modern democratic practices. But Analjit still wouldn't budge. Many say his attitude reflects the "new" Doon School – more interested in money and autocracy than the values of its founding fathers who promoted transparency, accountability, selflessness and character-building in the spirit of Tagore. g

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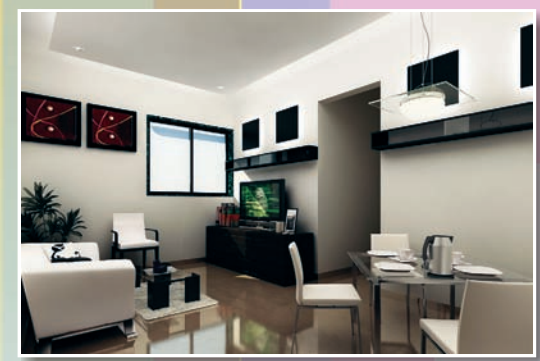

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